



Northrop Grumman to Demonstrate Faster, Simpler Way to Replace Obsolete Parts for B-2 Bomber

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Common Processor approach promises reduced sustainment costs, enhanced readiness

PALMDALE, Calif., Feb. 5, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. Air Force will get its first look at a faster, more affordable way to replace obsolete avionics on the B-2 stealth bomber under a contract awarded last August to Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC).

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20121024/LA985631.0GO>)

Under the 43-month, \$43.5 million award, the company will produce a functional replacement for a B-2 avionics box called the Audio Central Distribution Unit (ACDU). More significantly, the work will map out a smart, cost-effective way to address a growing threat to B-2 readiness: mission-essential parts that cannot be repaired or easily replaced.

Northrop Grumman is the Air Force's prime contractor for the B-2, the flagship for the nation's long range strike arsenal and one of the world's most survivable aircraft.

"Northrop Grumman has developed a concept called the Common Processor to create same-size, functional replacements for many of the B-2's most critical avionics units – in a fraction of the time and cost required to do custom replacements for those units," said Dave Mazur, vice president and B-2 program manager, Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems. "The ACDU will be the first B-2 avionics line replaceable unit [LRU] to be produced using this approach."

An increasing number of LRUs on the jet face or will soon face obsolescence, explained Mazur. In some cases, the company that produced an LRU is out of business or can no longer produce the unit. In other cases, the equipment required to test an LRU is no longer available.

The Common Processor concept is achieved by taking advantage of functional similarities among avionics LRUs on the B-2 today. Common hardware elements will be used in unique combinations to create different types of LRUs.

"One of the most powerful features of the Common Processor is that it will allow B-2 maintainers to use one common set of test equipment for all of the replacement LRUs," said Mazur. "This approach will reduce avionics sustainment costs and help improve aircraft availability."

Northrop Grumman and the Air Force have identified 21 different current LRUs on the B-2 that could be replaced using the Common Processor, he added. Each LRU has multiple copies on the jet.

The B-2 is the only long-range, large-payload U.S. aircraft that can penetrate deeply into access-denied airspace. It is also the only combat-proven stealth platform in the current U.S. inventory. It can fly more than 6,000 nautical miles unrefueled and more than 10,000 nautical miles with just one aerial refueling, giving it the ability to reach any point on the globe within hours.

The latest B-2 product news and information from Northrop Grumman is available at <http://www.northropgrumman.com/B-2>.

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